



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Roanoke, VA – The Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau Sports Marketing Committee has a stellar record of competing - and winning bids - to bring major sports events and millions of dollars to the Roanoke Valley. Today the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau and regional partners announced that the 2006 US Challenge, organized by Challenger World, will take place in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains on October 20-21, 2006.

US Challenge, a national event presented by FORTUNE, is part of the world's fastest growing teambuilding concepts, designed to create great teams for business. Up to 70 companies will develop teams, consisting of five individuals, to compete in this event which is intended to inspire the staff, energize business and increase productivity through teambuilding. Over two action packed days and nights, athletes might be kayaking through fast flowing rivers, scaling the Blue Ridge Mountains, navigating through forests at night, cracking codes or engineering tasks using the simplest to the most complex equipment. Challenger World uses a specialized formula called Intelligent Sports™ to challenge competing teams. To succeed, teams must show intelligence, strong communication skills, teamwork and the ability to strategize. In 2005, over 300 teams from FORTUNE 500 businesses, including Accenture, Cisco Systems, Dell, Microsoft, First National Bank and Volvo, competed in challenges around the world.

Blaine Shively, President of the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau stated, "The Roanoke Valley is excited and proud to welcome the 2006 US Challenge to our region." In early November 2005, the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau

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Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau

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received an e-mail from an independent meeting firm requesting a proposal for US Challenge. After discussing the information with the firm, it was presented to the Roanoke Valley Sports Marketing Committee Chairman. In addition, the Roanoke County Economic Development Partnership and Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce partnered with the Roanoke Valley Sports Marketing Committee because of the positive impact this could have for economic development in the region. After hosting Challenger World for a site visit, a proposal was submitted. The Roanoke Valley was one of four destinations being considered. In December 2005, the Roanoke Valley was awarded the bid.

The US Challenge will be regional in scope. Partners include the County of Roanoke, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Town of Vinton, County of Botetourt, County of Franklin, Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce, Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership and the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau. With the use of facilities in multiple jurisdictions and the impact it has on businesses, this event will benefit the entire Valley.

The US Challenge will provide incredible exposure for the Roanoke Valley. With over \$750,000 in pre-event promotions, Challenger World will place full-page, color advertisements in publications such as FORTUNE and Delta Sky. Additionally, a 30 minute television spot will be produced to air after the event, providing even more coverage and promotion for the Valley on both a national and international level.

Loren W. Acton (Ph D.), with the United Space Alliance, a US astronaut from 1985 – 1992 and Shuttle Commander from 1990 – 1992, participated in the competition. “I have had the opportunity to do some very exciting and unique things in my life, and the World Challenge ranks right up there with the best! The way your organization plots the events so that strategy, planning, and observational skills are just as important as physical prowess, provides a series of very challenging stages of competition,” he explained.

Are you up for the challenge? Your company can enter a team. Or you can partner with clients and enter a team. Whether you are up for the challenge or want to get involved through volunteering or sponsorship, contact the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau for additional information. This event truly provides the opportunity to showcase the Valley’s outstanding outdoor amenities, as well as its lifestyle and business attributes.

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